

# ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name(s):** Coastal Services Center (CSC), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** Technical Assistance for Coastal Managers Program
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** CSC 2004
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance(CFDA)Number(s):** 11.473, NOAA CSC
- **Dates:** Proposals must be received by the CSC no later than 5 p.m., local time, March 15, 2004.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The Technical Assistance for Coastal Managers program represents an NOAA/CSC effort to improve the use of monitoring data and geospatial information and technology in coastal management through collaborative work with members of the coastal management community that have expertise in community planning and resource management. These activities will engage coastal managers from multiple organizations and levels of government and improve the management of coastal resources by applying geospatial knowledge, practices, and principles to new approaches for managing coastal resources. The Technical Assistance for Coastal Managers program contributes to other efforts at the NOAA/CSC and is designed to complement those efforts.

## FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

### **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

#### A. Program Objective

The objective of the Technical Assistance for Coastal Managers program is to improve the use of geospatial information and technology in coastal management by addressing the following NOAA priorities through collaborative work with the coastal management community: provide education, training, and capacity building opportunities for coastal managers that focus on the application of geospatial technologies to coastal issues; sustain student internship

programs to increase the knowledge of geospatial technologies and their application to coastal management; and work with the coastal management community to promote adherence to nationally-recognized standards for development of and access to geospatial information.

## B. Program Priorities

NOAA/CSC will give sole attention to individual proposals that address one or more of the program priorities described and listed below. Proposals must clearly specify which program priority is being addressed. A proposal must contain tasks that address each element listed for the priority chosen. All awards will be in the form of a cooperative agreement, which allows the NOAA/CSC to have substantial involvement in the projects in addition to providing funds. Applicants must propose a role for the NOAA/CSC that constitutes the substantial involvement listed for that priority.

The names, affiliations, and phone numbers of relevant NOAA/CSC personnel are provided. Prospective applicants should communicate with these focal points to ensure the role specified for the NOAA/CSC is practicable. Focal points cannot assist in the conceptual design of the project nor can they help with the design of specific elements included in a proposal. Applicants should send completed proposals to the NOAA/CSC office identified in Section IV.F., rather than to individual focal points.

### 1. Increasing coordination and planning between local land trusts, state agencies, and regional planning agencies within New England

Establishing and enhancing partnerships for collaborative coastal planning is a priority of the NOAA/CSC. Partnerships that focus on managing coastal resources, prioritizing conservation efforts, and building the capacity within non-governmental land managers, such as land trusts, are an essential component to meeting this priority. Proposals that address this priority must include the following elements:

- a. A project study area within New England.
- b. Focus on local coastal conservation issues that also have regional or national significance.
- c. Integration of national and local land trusts to develop new or enhance existing partnerships with state coastal resource managers.
- d. Development of a conservation plan for a region or watershed within New England.
- e. Use of the expertise at the NOAA/CSC in development and delivery of training and in the development of geospatial decision-support tools.
- f. Dissemination of lessons learned to other managers of coastal resources in order to facilitate application of results and the process to other regions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Hamilton Smillie, NOAA/CSC/GIS Integration and Development Program, 843-740-1192, or on the Internet at [Hamilton.Smillie@noaa.gov](mailto:Hamilton.Smillie@noaa.gov).

2. Development of a nationally consistent inventory system for geospatial data at the state level

Establishing an inventory system for geospatial data that is nationally consistent and focused on state-level needs is a NOAA/CSC priority. Partnerships that will expand existing inventories of geospatial data and use the Internet to increase access to the data are critical steps to accomplishing this priority. Proposals that address this priority must include the following elements:

- a. Development of a national plan for integrating geospatial inventories.
- b. Provide standards and a framework for Internet-searchable databases of geospatial inventories.
- c. Needs assessments and requirements analyses.
- d. A plan that will lead to the elimination of duplicative, incompatible individual state and regional geospatial inventory systems.
- e. Use of the expertise at the NOAA/CSC in development of metadata standards and in the establishment of geospatial clearinghouses that follow formats endorsed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee.
- f. Dissemination of lessons learned to other managers of geospatial data in order to facilitate application of results and the process to other regions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Hamilton Smillie, NOAA/CSC/GIS Integration and Development Program, 843-740-1192, or on the Internet at [Hamilton.Smillie@noaa.gov](mailto:Hamilton.Smillie@noaa.gov).

3. Increasing education and research opportunities in the application of GIS and remote sensing technologies to coastal resource management, with emphasis on recruiting under-represented minorities

Increasing participation by under-represented minorities in the fields of GIS and remote sensing of coastal environments is a NOAA/CSC priority. Partnerships between programs that focus on providing education and research opportunities for under-represented minorities in geospatial sciences with programs that focus on the technical needs of coastal management community are a critical step to achieving this priority. Proposals that address this priority must include the following elements:

- a. Establishing partnerships between the coastal management community and organizations that provide opportunities for minority students to learn essential workplace skills in the field of geospatial information technology.
- b. Leverage existing educational curricula, such as product testing and exposure, to promote awareness of a wide range of geospatial products and services critical to the coastal resource management community.
- c. Use of the expertise of the NOAA/CSC in the development and delivery of the education.

d. Dissemination of lessons learned to other managers of coastal resources in order to facilitate application of results and the process to other institutions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Hamilton Smillie, NOAA/CSC/GIS Integration and Development Program, 843-740-1192, or on the Internet at [Hamilton.Smillie@noaa.gov](mailto:Hamilton.Smillie@noaa.gov).

#### 4. Incorporation of seagrass into the monitoring of the health of special management areas

Increasing the representation of critical habitats that support NOAA trust resources in the monitoring of special management areas, such as National Estuarine Research Reserves, is a NOAA/CSC priority. Partnerships that leverage well-accepted, peer-reviewed protocols for monitoring these habitats with established, standardized monitoring programs is a critical step to achieving this priority. Proposals that address this priority must include the following elements:

- a. Development of a plan that uses well-established, peer-reviewed protocols for collecting geospatial information about the extent and health of seagrass and other submersed, rooted vegetation that focuses on National Estuarine Research Reserves or other coastal areas with special management designations.
- b. Development of appropriate quality assurance and quality control processes.
- c. Development and delivery of training on the use of the protocol and quality control and quality assurance steps to groups that will implement the monitoring on a regular basis.
- d. Provide a mechanism for distributing the data to other researchers and for educating the public.
- e. Increase the value of the data by leveraging with similar data sets from other coastal areas.
- f. Use of the expertise of the NOAA/CSC in the development and delivery of the training.
- g. Dissemination of lessons learned to other managers of coastal resources in order to facilitate application of results and the process to other institutions.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Pace Wilber, NOAA/CSC/Landscape Characterization and Restoration Program, 843-740-1235, or on the Internet at [Pace.Wilber@noaa.gov](mailto:Pace.Wilber@noaa.gov).

#### 5. Pilot projects supporting the Data Management and Communications component of the Integrated Ocean Observing System

Increasing the coastal observational data available through the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) that supports coastal resource management needs is a priority of the NOAA/CSC. Partnerships that (1) further development of standards for coastal observations and (2) make data available in coordination with the IOOS Data Management and Communications Plan (DMAC) and other standards advocated by Ocean.US are critical steps towards accomplishing this priority. All ocean or coastal observations will be considered but the advancement of the Ocean Biological Information System (OBIS) or the National Estuarine Research Reserves System

(NERRS) System-wide Monitoring Program (SWMP) as components of IOOS are of particular interest to the NOAA/CSC. Proposals that address this priority must include the following elements:

- a. A definition and description of the proposed coastal observation and its importance to IOOS and coastal managers.
- b. The creation of a working data integration demonstration project in accordance with the DMAC plan and standards process.
- c. The development of a data management plan in coordination with the appropriate national data center and the delivery of the data to the data center upon completion of the cooperative agreement.
- d. The creation of a broad-based team of experts on the proposed observational data type in accordance to the IOOS Data Management and Communications (DMAC) standards process.
- e. The development of the standards needed to thoroughly describe the selected coastal observation following the current DMAC plan and standards process (see [www.ocean.us](http://www.ocean.us)).
- f. Supporting information that meets the DMAC requirements in the case that such standards already exist (see element e.) and have been widely adopted (see element d.).
- g. A plan that includes NOAA/CSC and the appropriate DMAC team(s) in the development of the standards and the data integration demonstration.
- h. A list of partners who are experts on the selected data type and a letter of support for the project from each partner.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anne Ball, NOAA/CSC/Landscape Characterization and Restoration Program, 843-740-1229, or on the Internet at [Anne.Ball@noaa.gov](mailto:Anne.Ball@noaa.gov).

### C. Program Authority

Authority for the Technical Assistance for Coastal Managers program is provided by the following: 16 U.S.C. 1456c (Technical Assistance); and 33 U.S.C. 1442 (research program respecting possible long-range effects of pollution, overfishing, and man-induced changes of ocean ecosystems).

## **II. Award Information**

### A. Funding Availability for FY2004

This funding opportunity announces that approximately \$1,750,000 will be available through this announcement for fiscal year 2004. Proposals should be prepared assuming a total budget of no more than \$500,000 for priorities (1) and (4) and \$125,000 for priorities (2),(3) and (5). It is expected that one award will be made for priority areas (1) through (4) and up to three awards for priority (5), depending on availability of funds.

## B. Project/Award Period

This program announcement is for projects with award periods of up to 3 years. The earliest anticipated start date for the awards is June 1, 2004. If an application is selected for initial funding, the NOAA/CSC has no obligation to provide additional funding in connection with that award in subsequent years.

## C. Type of funding instrument

The funding instrument for extramural awards will be a cooperative agreement since one or more NOAA/CSC components will be substantially involved in implementing the project. The substantial involvement for the NOAA/CSC relevant to each priority is listed beneath each priority.

## **III. Eligibility Information**

### A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, hospitals, other non-profits, commercial organizations, foreign governments, organizations under the jurisdiction of foreign governments, international organizations, and state, local and Indian tribal governments. Federal agencies or institutions are not eligible to receive Federal assistance under this announcement.

### B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

No cost sharing is required under this program.

### C. Other

Federal Government employees are not allowed to be listed as principle investigators, although collaboration between the coastal management community and NOAA within the project is strongly encouraged.

## **IV. Application and Submission Information**

### A. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages are available at <http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/%7Egrants/appkit.html>

If for some reason the applicant has difficulty downloading the required forms, he or she should

contact Violet Legette, NOAA/CSC; 2234 Hobson Avenue; Charleston, SC 29405-2413, or by phone at 843-740-1222, or fax to 743-740-1232, or via Internet at [Violet.Legette@noaa.gov](mailto:Violet.Legette@noaa.gov).

## B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Proposals must adhere to the two provisions under “Proposals” and the seven requirements under “Required Elements” by the deadline of March 15, 2004. Failure to follow these restrictions will result in proposals being returned to the submitter without review.

### 1. Proposals

a. Proposals submitted to the NOAA/CSC Technical Assistance for Coastal Managers program must include the original and two unbound copies of the proposal.

b. Project proposals should be no more than 10 pages (double spaced and 12-point font); exclusive of appendices. Appendices should be limited to materials that directly support the main body of the proposal; e.g., support letters, resumes, lists of data sources, maps, detailed budget breakdowns. Letters of support may be mailed separately, but must be received by the March 15, 2004, deadline. All appendix materials must be unbound. Federally mandated forms are not included within the page count.

### 2. Required Elements

All proposals should include the following elements:

a. Signed title page. The title page should be signed by the principle investigators and the institutional representative and should clearly indicate which NOAA/CSC priority area is being addressed. The principle investigators and institutional representative should be identified by full name, title, organization, telephone number, and address.

b. Abstract: An abstract must be included and should contain an introduction to the problem, rationale, and a summary of work to be completed. The abstract should appear on a separate page, headed with the proposal title, institution's investigators, total proposed cost, and project duration.

c. Project background/Introduction. Define the coastal management issue(s) that will be focused upon and their significance, as well as the information, data and analyses required to address the issue. Identify the basic project goals and any objectives. Discuss the applicability of the issue and anticipated final product to the broad range of customers or areas.

d. Project description/Methodology. Address the general work plan and deliverables. Methodology should specifically define methods to address the problem or issue, including descriptions of the technology or software that will be applied. Database format must be adequately described (if appropriate) and included a supplemental descriptor file that contains the information necessary for completing metadata in a format endorsed by the Federal Geographic Data Committee for any data that are created or used within the project.

e. Project partners and subcontractors. Identify any project partners and describe their respective roles. When formal partners already exist, include letters from the partners that

demonstrate that they understand the authority of the lead agency in product development. When formal partnerships do not already exist, describe plan for developing them. Describe the resources available to cooperators and partners to conduct the project, including personnel qualifications (including education, experience, and time available to work on the project), facilities, equipment, and any relevant information and tools that already exist. Describe how widely the project is supported within the coastal management community and offer evidence of that support.

f. Milestone schedule. List target milestones and their respective time lines.

g. Project budget. Proposals should provide a detailed justification of the budget that follows the categories and formats in the NOAA grants package.

#### C. Submission Dates and Times

The deadline for receipt of proposals at the NOAA/CSC office in Charleston, SC, is 5 p.m., local time, March 15, 2004. Proposals received after the deadline will be returned to the sender without further consideration. NOAA/CSC determines whether an application has been submitted before the deadline by date/time stamping the applications as they are physically received in the NOAA/CSC office.

#### D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." It is the state agency's responsibility to contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the state's process under EO 12372. To assist the applicant, the names and addresses of the SPOCs is listed in the Office of Management and Budget's home page at <  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>>.

#### E. Funding Restrictions

\_\_\_\_\_No special restrictions apply. The program is seeking applications for non-construction projects.

#### F. Other Submission Requirements

\_\_\_\_\_All applicants are to submit hard copy proposals only. Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of proposals will not be accepted. The hard copies may be submitted by postal mail, commercial delivery service, or hand-delivery. Proposals must be submitted to: Violet Legette; Room 218; NOAA/CSC; 2234 Hobson Avenue; Charleston, SC 29405-2413.

### V. Application Review Information

#### A. Evaluation Criteria



The evaluation criteria and weighting of the criteria are as follows:

1. Importance/relevance and applicability of the proposal to program goals (25 points): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state or local activities. For the Technical Assistance for Coastal Managers program, this includes: How well the proposal demonstrates the local significance or regional importance of the needs(s) or management objective(s) that will guide development of the project. At a minimum, the proposal must identify coastal management goals that currently are not being achieved, describe how the products from the project will significantly address that deficiency, and state the benefits that will result to the public and coastal management community. How well the applicant demonstrates that the project outcomes will significantly address the coastal management issues(s) targeted by the project and that the collective resources of the applicant and partners will ensure projected outcomes are met.

2. Technical/scientific merit (30 points): This criterion assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives. For the Technical Assistance for Coastal Managers program, this also includes: How well the proposal divides the project into discrete tasks that make effective use of the technical capabilities of the cooperator, partner(s) and the Center. How well the proposal identifies a plan for managing project tasks, coordinating among the various contributors, and implementing product development. How well the proposed work will apply knowledge of geospatial practices and principles to new approaches for managing coastal resources.

3. Overall qualifications of the applicant (10 points): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possess the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish this project. For the Technical Assistance for Coastal Managers program, this includes: How well the proposal demonstrates that the project is broadly supported by the resource management community; that a broad group of resource managers and constituents will benefit from the product(s) and contribute to their design and assembly; and that a broad group of resource managers will use the product(s). This criterion includes such features as a plan for managing public involvement, a team approach to decision making, letters of support from users and partners, and a plan for disseminating the products and training to the coastal management community.

4. Project costs (10 points): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For the Technical Assistance for Coastal Managers program, this also includes: How well the applicant demonstrates that the budget is commensurate with project needs and the partnerships employed will improve the overall cost effectiveness of the project and value of the products by contributing funds, expertise, or other resources.

5. Outreach and education (25 points): This criterion assesses whether the project

provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources. For the Technical Assistance for Coastal Managers program, this also includes: How well the applicant integrates distribution mechanisms, such as clearinghouses, to disseminate outputs and lesson learned to audiences well positioned to take advantage of those experiences. How well the applicant integrates outreach and education activities into the work in order to assure the project outputs will significantly address management goals.

## B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review/screening is conducted to determine compliance with requirements/completeness. All proposals will be evaluated and individually ranked in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by an independent peer panel review. At least three NOAA experts will be used in this process. The panelists will provide individual evaluations on proposals, thus there will be no consensus recommendation. All proposals reviewed will be ranked according to the average score and the selecting official (NOAA/CSC's Director) will award in rank order, unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the selection factors below. Thus proposals with the highest scores may not necessarily be selected for an award.

## C. Selection Factors

The Merit review ratings shall provide a rank order to the Selecting Official for final recommendation to the NOAA Grants Officer. The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon 1, 2a, 2b, 2d, 2e, 3 or 5 of the following factors:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds
  - a. Geographically
  - b. By type of institutions
  - c. By type of partners
  - d. By research areas
  - e. By project types
3. Duplication of other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA/federal agencies
4. Program priorities and policy factors
5. Applicant's prior award performance
6. Partnerships with/Participation of targeted group.

## D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of proposals will occur during March 2004, and funding should begin during summer 2004 for most approved projects. June 1, 2004, should be used as the proposed start date on proposals, unless otherwise directed by the NOAA Program Officer.

## **VI. Award Administration Information**

### **A. Award Notices**

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. It is provided by postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization.

NOAA/CSC will notify unsuccessful applicants, in writing, by postal mail. Those proposals that are not ultimately selected for funding will be destroyed.

### **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the Federal Register notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109). You may obtain a copy of these by notices by contacting the agency contact(s) under Section VII, or by going to the website at < <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/search.html> >.

Applicants whose proposed projects may have an environmental impact should furnish sufficient information to assist proposal reviewers in assessing the potential environmental consequences of supporting the project.

### **C. Reporting**

Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer and Performance (technical) reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Program Officer. Financial and performance reports are semi-annual.

## **VII. Agency Contact(s)**

Contact Violet Legette, NOAA/CSC; 2234 Hobson Avenue; Charleston, SC 29405-2413, or by phone at 843-740-1222, or fax to 743-740-1232, or via Internet at [Violet.Legette@noaa.gov](mailto:Violet.Legette@noaa.gov).